[Reprint]

THE MINER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

(BY J. M. HUTCHINGS.)

"See, I've Struck It!"

Address J. M. HUTCHINGS, 2221 California Street, S. F.

THE MINER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS.

These were written and first published in the *Placerville Herald*, 1853. An effort being there made to turn the then principal business day, Sunday, into the peaceful Sabbath of Eastern cities, and the enemies of such a movement assuming that miners could not and would not do their trading on any other day, and feeling that any amount of moralizing with miners would be time and effort wasted, I wrote the old-time "Miner's Ten Commandments." These meeting with general acceptance among miners, called for their frequent re-publication; and they were eventually published in letter-sheet form, with illustrations. All old Californians will recall these to memory. And, strange as it may seem, *no less than ninety-seven thousand of these letter-sheets were sold in a little over one year!* and that, too, when the entire population of the State was less than five times that number.

As these have been out of print for many years, at the request of many old friends they are now reproduced in the present form. Hoping that they will prove acceptable to the public, and renew, pleasantly, many memories of the past, I remain,

Very Sincerely Yours,

J. M. H.

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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THE

Miner's Ten Commandments.

A MAN SPAKE THESE WORDS, AND SAID:

I am a Miner, who wandered from "away down East," and came to sojourn in a strange land, and "see the elephant." And behold I saw him, and can bear witness, that from the key of his trunk to the end of his tail, his whole body has passed before me: and lo! I followed him, until his huge feet stood still before a clapboard shanty, then with his trunk extended, he pointed to a candle-card tacked upon a shingle, as though he would say, "READ!" and I read

The Miner's Ten Commandments.

I.

Thou shalt have no other claim than one.

II.

Thou shalt not make unto thyself any false claim, nor any likeness to a mean man by jumping one; whatsoever thou findest on the top above, or on the rock beneath, or in a crevice underneath the rock; for, if thou doest, I shall

surely visit the miners around, and tell them what thou hast done; and, should they decide against thee, thou shalt take thy pick-axe and thy pan, thy shovel and thy blankets, with all that thou hast, and "go prospecting" for "new diggings," but thou shalt find none. Then, when in sorrow and despair thou returnest to thine old claim, thou shalt find it all worked out; and yet no "pile" made for thee, that thou mightest bury it in the ground, or hide it in an old boot beneath thy bunk, or in buckskin or bottle beneath thy cabin floor. Besides this, thou shalt discover that all that thou hadst in thy purse has quietly drifted away; that thy boots and thy garments have been worn out, so that there is nothing good about them but the pockets, and thy patience will be like unto thy garments; and, as a last resort, thou shalt hire thy body out to make thy board and save thy worthless bacon.

III.

Thou shalt not go prospecting before thy claim gives out. Neither shalt thou take thy money nor thy gold dust, nor thy good name, to the gaming-table in vain; for "monte," "roulette," "twenty-one," "faro," "lansquenet," "poker," or any other game will conclusively prove to thee that the more thou puttest down, the less thou shalt take up; and when thou thinkest of the gray hairs that thou art bringing "in sor-

row to the grave," of the home thou hast disgraced, of family and friends that thou hast wronged, thou shalt ask thyself, "Verily, am I not a simpleton of the first water?"

IV.

Thou shalt not remember what thy friends do at home on the Sabbath day, lest the remembrance should not compare favorably with what thou doest here; for well thou knowest that on that day thou washest all thy dirty clothes, darnest all thy stockings, patchest up thy nether garments, dost tap thy boots, chop thy whole week's firewood, make up and bake thy bread, and boil thy pork and beans, that thou wait not when at night thou returnest from thy labors weary. But, alas! thou rememberest not that for six days thou mayest dig, or pick, or wash, all that thy body can stand under; by which, if thou art careful, thou canst not wear out thy body in two years, but if thou workest hard on Sunday also thou canst do it in six months; and thou and thy wife, thy son and thy daughter, thy male friend and thy female friend, thy morals and thy conscience, be none the better for it: and thou shalt not strive to justify thyself because the trader and the blacksmith, the carpenter and the merchant, the tailor and cheap-john huckster, the gamblers and buccaneers, defy God, religion and civilization, by keeping not the Sabbath

Day, such as memory, youth, and home, made hallowed.

V.

Thou shalt not think more of gold, and how thou canst make it fastest, than of how thou art likely to enjoy it, after thou hast ridden rough-shod over all thy good old parents' precepts and examples; that thou mayest have nothing to reproach and sting thee, when thou art left ALONE in the land to which thy mother's love and father's blessing hath unswervingly followed thee.

VI.

Thou shalt not ruin thy health, nor kill thy body, by working in the rain, even though thou shouldst make enough thereby to buy physic and attendance with. Neither shalt thou destroy thyself by getting "tight," nor "high," nor "slewed, nor "corned," nor "half seas over," nor "three sheets in the wind," by drinking smoothly down, "brandy slings," "gin cocktails," "whiskey punches," "rum toddies," nor "egg nogs;" neither shalt thou suck "mint julips," nor "sherry coblers" through a straw; nor gurgle from a bottle's neck into thine own the "raw material;" nor "take it neat" from a decanter, nor guzzle "lager beer" or "half and half" until thou art like a swine; inasmuch as while thou art swallowing down thy purse, and thy coat from off thy back, thou art burning it from off thy

stomach, besides devouring thine own and others' heritages. And if thou couldst see the houses and lands, with piles of gold and silver thou hast gobbled up, and the home comforts thou hast sacrificed and wasted, thou shouldst feel a choking in thy throat; and when to these thou addest thy crooked walkings, and thy hic-hiccuping talkings, of lodgings in the gutter, of broilings in the sun, of prospect holes half full of mud and water, and of shafts and ditches from which thou hast emerged like a drowning rat, thou shalt feel disgusted with thyself and all such reminiscences, and enquire: "Is thy servant a dog that he doeth these things?" Surely, then, thou wilt be tempted to say: "Farewell, old bottle, I will kiss thy whiskey-moistened lips no more. And thou, slings, cocktails, punches, toddies, nogs, julips, and sangarees, forever farewell. Thy remembrance shames me; henceforth, therefore, 'I cut thy acquaintance,' and with thee, headaches, tremblings, heartburnings, blue devils, and all the unholy catalogue of evils that follow in thy train. My wife's welcoming smile and kiss, and my children's merry-hearted laugh, shall charm and reward me for having the manly courage, at all times, and under every kind of circumstances, to say NO. Strong drink, comest thou in any form or garb, I wish thee an eternal farewell.

VII.

Thou shalt not grow discouraged because thou hast not made thy "pile," nor think of going home for not having "struck a lead," nor "found a rich crevice," nor "sunk a hole upon a pocket," lest in going home thou shalt leave three or four dollars a day, and there go to work, ashamed, at fifty cents—and serve thee right—for, as thou well knowest, sooner or later here thou mightest strike "pay dirt" in some shape, keep thy self-respect, and then seek home to make thyself and others happy.

VIII.

Thou shalt not steal a pick, or a shovel, or a pan from thy fellow miner; nor take away his tools without his leave; nor borrow those he cannot spare; nor return them broken; nor trouble him to fetch them back again when he needs their use. Neither shalt thou spin long yarns to him while his water rent is running on; nor remove his stakes to enlarge thy claim; nor undermine his bank in following a lead; nor pan out gold from his riffle-box; nor wash the tailings from his sluice's mouth. Neither shalt thou take specimens from the company's pan and put them into thy mouth until thou canst, unseen, transfer them to thy purse; nor cheat thy partner of the smallest portion of his fair share; nor steal from thy cabin-mate his gold dust to add it unto thine; for in any one or all of these things

he will be sure to discover what thou hast done, when he will straightway call "a miners' meeting," and if the law hinder them not, they will hang thee; or give thee fifty lashes, accompanied with the ejaculation "vamose"; or they will shave thy head, and brand thee like a horse thief, with R burned in upon thy cheek, to be known and read of all men—Californians in particular.

IX.

Thou shalt not tell any false tales about "good diggings in the mountains" to thy neighbor, that thou mayest benefit a friend who hath mules, and provisions, and tools, and blankets he could not otherwise sell; lest, after thus deceiving thy neighbor, when he returneth through the snow, with naught left him but his rifle, he present thee with the leaden contents thereof, and, like a dog, thou shalt fall down and die; when public opinion expressed upon the case would be, "served him right."

X.

Thou shalt not commit "unsuitable matrimony," nor covet "single blessedness"; nor forget "absent maidens"; nor neglect thy "first love," knowing how patiently, and faithfully, aye longingly, she watchingly awaiteth thy return, yea, and covereth every epistle that thou sendeth her with kisses—until she hath thyself. Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's wife, nor by pres-

ents or attentions steal away her heart-love from him, nor trifle with the affections of his daughter; yet, if thy heart be free, and thou lovest and covetest each other, thou shalt "pop the question" like a man, lest another more manly than thou art should step in before thee, and thenceforward thou love her in vain; and in the anguish of thy heart's disappointment thou shouldst regretfully express thyself thus: "*Verrily, sich is life!*" and thy future lot be that of a poor, crusty, lonely, despised and comfortless old bachelor.

"A New Commandment Give I unto Thee."

If thou hast a wife and little ones that thou lovest dearer than thine own life, thou shalt keep them constantly before thee, to nerve and prompt thee to every noble effort, until thou canst say, "Thank God, I now have enough. I will return to them." Then as thou journeyest toward thy much-loved home and precious ones, ere thou hast crossed the blessed threshold, they shall welcome thee with kisses, and, falling upon thy neck, weep tears of unutterable joy that thou art come. *So mote it be.*

FORTY-NINE.

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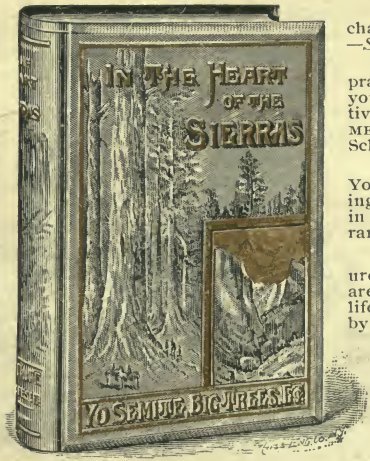

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